



YosemiteDems.net

The Mountain Democrat
Newsletter Editor
PO Box 760
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THE MOUNTAIN DEMOCRAT



APRIL – MAY 2009

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The Mountain Democrat is published bimonthly by the Democratic Clubs of Eastern Madera and Mariposa Counties which are affiliated with the California Democratic Council, and is distributed to all current members of those clubs. For a membership application see the inside back cover of this newsletter.

COMING EVENTS

April 2009

Apr 4: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Apr 11: Mariposa Club Meeting

Apr 18: Jefferson Dinner
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May 2009

May 2: Oakhurst Club Meeting

May 9: Mariposa Club Meeting

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For more information about our Democratic Clubs and Democratic happenings around the state and nation open your trusty web browser and visit our web page at:

YosemiteDems.net

**"Hey, Brother -
Can You Spare An Evening?"**



Jefferson Dinner

Time and Location

Saturday, April 18, 2009

6:00 PM

Best Western Hotel
Conference Room

Corner Hwy 140 and Hwy 49
Mariposa

Menu

A selection of delicious
soups,
cornbread and brownies

Speaker

To be announced

Silent Auction

A wonderful, varied selection of items

Ticket Information

Adults: \$19.35

Children 6 - 11 Years: \$10.00

Children Under 6 Years: Free

Call Nancy or Julie at 209-742-5236

Sponsored By

Mariposa County Democratic Central Committee
and
Mariposa Democratic Club

What Can I Do?

By Anne Brock

That's the question we all have been asking ourselves since Barack Obama's historic win in November 2008. What can I do to help the country and Obama's agenda? What can I do to help advance Democratic issues? What can I do to make a difference, now that we've gotten rid of eight years of Republican control?

Now, to listen to the Republicans, you would think Democrats had been in charge the last eight years. Republicans are developing a massive case of amnesia and are blaming all the problems on the Democrats. They also seem to think that continuing their failed policies of the last eight years – cutting taxes on the rich, denying funding for social services, ignoring science – are still the right answer.

We know better. Obama does have the right ideas; and we elected him to do the things he campaigned on. But now comes the hard part – governing. Obama needs our continued pressure so that he can continue to prove that he's leading the majority. As Roosevelt said in 1932 to a group of reformers: "I agree with you, I want to do it, now make me do it." We need to keep letting Obama know what we think, through letters to him and our elected representatives; through phone calls, through petitions, through rallies. If we don't continue to express our opinions loudly, he will lose momentum.

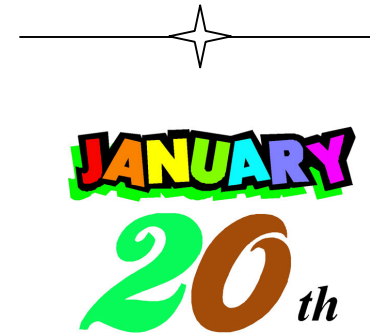
So what can we do? At every Mariposa Democratic meeting, we are trying to have at least one action for our members to take, on either a local, state, or federal issue. Our last meeting included actions for the schools, to ask Senator Feinstein to support the Employee Choice Act, and to ask Congressman Radanovich to support a bill banning testing on apes. We send these actions out – via email – after the meeting, and hope members who don't come to the meetings will do them.

What Can I Do (continued)

So the first thing you can do – come to the meeting or do the followup action. If you don't have email – it really is time to get it (and to share your address with the club). I know there are still people without emails, but these days that's how political communications are getting out. You can get online at the library; they will be happy to help you. Or get in touch with one of your "connected" Democratic members – we're all happy to help you get online if you aren't already.

Another thing you can do is suggest actions – Democracy is a bottom-up activity. What do YOU want Obama, the governor, Feinstein and Boxer, Radanovich, to take notice of? Let us know! Bring your action to the meeting or have us email it out. You are the club. Without you, nothing will happen.

Hope to see you at the next meeting, ready to commit ACTION!



What A Difference A Day Makes

A day by day account of changes made by the
Obama Administration

<http://yosemitedems.net/DayDifference.html>

Fairness Is What Fairness Needs

By Peter Cavanaugh

“Mirror, Mirror on the wall. Who’s the fairest of them all?”, asks the wicked witch in *Snow White*. “Fair ball!”, shouts the umpire, as a home team scores the winning run. “That’s not fair!”, cries every child ever born anywhere when denied anything. I did.

But it’s hard fitting “fair” into framework. As Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart once ruled on obscenity, he couldn’t define it, but knew it when he saw it.

Having over 90% of government regulated, publicly owned AM/FM radio airwaves devoted to right-wing, ultra-reactionary, radically anti-progressive commentary is simply unfair. And this 90% plus percentage is, pun intended, a conservative estimate.

Such dominance in the last two decades came about through the mechanics of “free market” economics. Commercial sponsorship drives programming. Big Business loves Rush, Sean, Glenn, Mark and Ray just down the road.

In earlier times, the Federal Communications Commission enforced what came to be known as “The Fairness Doctrine”. This was a policy, not a law, firm definition proving elusive. It just meant all sides of important issues should be heard. It was never meant to shut people down, but open discussion up.

In August of 1987, under President Ronald Reagan, the F.C.C. abolished the Doctrine. In August of 1988, Rush Limbaugh, through the magic of newly emerging satellite technology, began national syndication with radio stations unhampered by the need to offer reasonable rebuttal to Liberal Losers, Environmentalist Wackos, Long-Haired, Dope-Smoking Hippies, and, in particular, Femi-Nazis. Ratings scored, profits soared and “Rush Rooms” flourished coast-to-coast. With lemming-like instinctive drive at full throttle, rewarded by riches, the American broadcast industry took a right hand turn, now intransigently locked in place.

Fairness Is What Fairness Needs (continued)

So comes Free Press. They want to reform media and transform democracy. Free Press offers lots of great ideas. and we can get involved right here in the Mountains. Right now. Click www.freepress.net. It’s all there.

I’m working with Senior Program Director Craig Aaron, with whom I spent an hour discussing fairness on Sirius Left (Channel 146) a few weeks ago. A major push for Free Press is Low-Power FM Radio. What Is LPFM? LPFM -- stations are community-based, nonprofit radio stations that broadcast at the local level, to neighborhoods and small towns throughout the country.

Run by nonprofits like colleges, churches, schools, labor unions and other community groups, LPFM stations provide local coverage, information and perspectives that are not available anywhere else. These noncommercial stations are uniquely positioned to meet local needs. LPFM stations may have a small broadcast range. They operate at 100 watts or less and have a broadcast reach of just a few miles, but their impact on local communities could be immense.

An editorial I was honored having recently published in the Pulitzer-Prize Winning Toledo Blade, admittedly pushes things a bit further: When 2009 financial covenants can't be met, taxpayer-owned (or owed) banks should seize the stations and/or groups which they funded and transfer the facilities in Federal Communications Commission-sanctioned public auctions to local interests.

In such transactions, former employees would receive special consideration, including the opportunity to be considered for small-business loans to not only gain control but participate in common, community-oriented ownership.

Oh, no! I must be an Environmentalist Wacko, Femi-Nazi, Dope-Smoking, Hippie Liberal. I hope.

From the Campaign Trail....

By Les Marsden

As you know, I'm running for Congress in our 19th District. I've been amazed by the hugely positive reaction to my run against Radanovich from both sides of the partisan divide since I announced my candidacy in-house. The staff is in place from Campaign Manager, Treasurer, Data Manager, Senior Issues Advisors, Photographer, Website Developer and more; we've opened our treasury and have our reporting and tax numbers. Our mail address: Marsden for Congress, PO Box 369, Midpines CA, 95345.

I've recently spoken at dinners for the Stanislaus County Central Committee's annual Crab Feed in Modesto, to the Stonewall Democratic Club in Fresno, the San Joaquin Valley Democratic Club in Fresno, the Merced-Mariposa Central Labor Council, informally to the Oakhurst Democratic Club at their monthly breakfasts, and (by the time you read this) will have been guest speaker at the March 26 meeting of the Merced Area Democrats and served as Master of Ceremonies for Peace Fresno's March 22 "Rally in the Valley" where (as of press time) I'll be honored to introduce Cindy Sheehan, among others. I'll have to miss the Oakhurst Club's April 4th Breakfast; I'm scheduled as Guest Speaker for the Kennedy Club of Fresno at breakfast that same morning. I've been asked to be on the same platform with (intended) guest of honor Senator Dianne Feinstein at the Fresno Democratic Women's Club formal dinner in April, date not yet set.

I was pleased to be described by Randy Bayne in his widely-read *California Notes*: "As for Congo George Radanovich, he does have a challenger. A very serious challenger in Les Marsden."

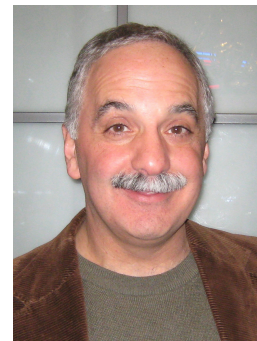
But it ain't all pretty. This is a VERY red district. Let's face it, folks: we must be pragmatic in this overwhelmingly conservative area. I won't get anywhere unless I can appeal to conservative voters. It's not enough for George to disenfranchise his base:

From the Campaign Trail....(continued)

I have to WOO that same base. I have to find common ground whereby I can unite the GOP and our Democratic base behind me. Not terribly easy, but then: "easy" has never interested me.

Agriculture and water are the two critical issues of our District. Up here in the eastern and mountainous portion of the 19th, it's not only the quantity of water, but the quality of it. Agriculture is the greatest economic engine imaginable, and the majority portion of this district relies upon it. But if water goes, agriculture will cease. And if agriculture dries up, the ancillary businesses dependent upon agriculture will also die. Countless jobs will be lost and the overall economy will be devastated. It's just that simple. But: having been blessed with the richest agricultural lands in the world: we're sitting in the catbird seat. We produce the one indispensable commodity: food. As the need for more food worldwide increases, we cannot cease feeding the world's hungry. As we've seen with the national economy, a little collapse affects the entire picture; it's all an intertwined economy here in the 19th. And rather than threaten the whole with losses, we have to strengthen what we have. Exactly the opposite of what George has done. And why we have a great responsibility to turn this District from red to blue - for the first time since 1994. I need your help - and I will accept it with great gratitude.

Please visit <http://www.MarsdenForCongress.com> to learn more.



Candidate Marsden
Sports a new 'do'!

We're ALL going to the State Democratic Convention TOGETHER!

By Peter Leinau

As your local elected delegate to the California Democratic Party Convention in April, I am looking forward to bringing all of the Mountain Democrats with me! I can only do that figuratively, of course, through representation of Mountain Democrat positions to the state Democratic Party- I can't fit everyone into the Subaru. ☺ I WILL do my best, however, to advocate for state party candidates and positions endorsed by our Democratic Clubs, and for other resolutions or positions that seem consistent with positions of the club memberships. It is critical to our representation that local clubs finalize at their April meetings any endorsements, resolutions, or positions that they wish me to represent to the state party, and communicate those positions to me prior to the convention.

At the convention I plan to participate in the Resolutions Committee meeting, Rural Caucus, Environmental and/or Progressive caucus (conflicting times), Labor caucus, and general sessions, voting sessions, and organizing workshops. Details of the convention agenda and workshops can be found at http://www.cadem.org/site/c.jrLZK2PyHmF/b.4955555/k.68F/2009_State_Convention.htm Mountain Democrats are welcome to contact me with questions or ideas at leinau4change@aol.com.



Let's "Meet in the Middle" for Marriage Equality!

By Anne Brock

As you all well know, the California Supreme Court is now considering whether or not to overturn Prop 8. It's not looking good for the "No on 8" side, but always hard to tell what the court is going to do.

But - win, lose, or draw - the LGBT and friends community is now focusing on what to do post-decision, which includes a nationwide push for equality, federal benefits, and equal protection.

So it turns out that Fresno is going to be the central rallying point after the decision .. yes, activists from SF, LA, Sacramento, etc. will all be converging on Fresno the Saturday after the decision to mourn or celebrate and, more importantly, move forward. It's called the "Meet in the Middle" action.

FRESNO IS THE CENTER! how cool is that? It's not that far for all of us. Let's plan on getting a good Mariposa turnout to it! Connect with your friends for car pooling. And let's have a good Mariposa presence!

Again - it will be the Saturday after the decision. The decision will come down on either a Monday or a Thursday; we'll have 24 hours notice that it's coming. So not much time after the decision to coordinate, but I know we can move on a dime around here!

Where: Fresno Downtown City Hall 2600 Fresno Street
When: 1:00 PM the Saturday after the court decision
www.meetinthemiddle4equality.com for more info

I'll see you then!

Mountain Democrats Turn Out for NO ON 8 Rally

By Kellie Briley

Wanted to let you know that we had a very productive and positive gathering today for our Oakhurst Repeal Prop. 8 Rally (on Thursday, March 12th). We had supporters from as far away as Fresno and as close as McDonald's. We had men and women of all persuasions, teenagers and children, too.

From the moment we stepped forward, at 5:00pm, onto the sidewalk at the Junction of 41 and 49, we were met with support from the streets in the form of non-stop honking, thumbs up, heads nodding and people smiling from their cars. The Sheriff and CHP drove by to make sure we weren't harassed (and we weren't).

Many members of the Democratic club showed up and waved their signs high in the air. Our sign-up sheet was full of names and is the seed we planted here today as this battle for justice continues.

What a happy group we were, chanting "2-4-6-8 Erase the H8TE and Advocate!" One of our friends from Fresno brought a bull-horn and we all sang "What the world needs now is love, sweet love, no not just for some, but for everyone!" The owner of the Old Mexican Taqueria came out to shake my hand as we had spoken on the phone to receive his blessing to gather near his restaurant. The final show of goodwill was a man who stopped by to give us a \$20 donation to further the cause. At about 6:10pm, we reluctantly dispersed, raised up by the show of goodwill in Oakhurst and hugs were given all around, liberally, of course.

Can you tell I'm excited? This is the beginning of the middle and none of us will stop until this work is done. Ellie, please let people know what a successful day this was, how proud of and grateful I am to all who attended for their bravery and willingness to fight for social justice here and around the world.

Federal Benefits Denied To Same Sex Couples

(or why we need marriage equality at the federal level, not just state)

A marriage license also confers 1,138 federal protections, rights and responsibilities upon married couples in the areas of:

- Social Security benefits
- immigration law
- the Family and Medical Leave Act
- health insurance and continuation of health coverage (COBRA)
- Medicaid
- retirement plans
- federal tax laws, and many more.

These federal protections are denied to same-sex couples, including those married in Massachusetts. The 1996 Defense of Marriage Act excludes gay and lesbian married couples from these protections, declaring that only opposite-sex married couples can access them.

Source:

www.glaad.org/media/guide/infocus/marriage.php

An Old Bank Auditor's View

by Ellie Schermerhorn

What in the world has happened with the banks? It's astonishingly simple! My experience reviewing bank loans tells me that, in recent years, the banks made loans to people who could not repay them under the terms they were written AT THE TIME THE LOANS WERE MADE. Why would they do this? Weren't they afraid they'd lose money on the loans? Nope. Why? Because the banks had no intention of keeping the loans, i.e. of being subject to the loans' credit risk. They knew there was a sucker out there in the market who would buy the loans from them in short order; they were "churning" the loans and prudent lending criteria went out the window. So that's the (albeit shocking) answer to the bad loan question.

Then you get into the AIGs of the world selling default credit swaps, which are insurance against debt default. These companies essentially operated unregulated insurance companies by selling these "promises", without having any capital reserve requirements to back them up. This excessive risk exposure only became apparent when the debt they were insuring with the default credit swaps, went sour. And that all gets back to the banks making loans that never should have been made in the first place.

So it all boils down to banks not having to "eat their own cooking", and we're all paying the price for capitalism run wild. The situation has shaken even stalwart Libertarians like Alan Greenspan to the core. He was sure that the companies' own interests in survival and fear of market punishment would keep them from engaging in these kinds of practices, but that proved false.

The Democratic clean-up crew in Washington (think about what you have to do when you follow the horses in the parade) is

An Old Bank Auditor's View (Continued)

dealing with the fallout. The question now is not if there will be bread lines, but how long the bread lines will be. That is what President Obama and the Democrats are trying to mitigate, and that is really all they are going to be able to do, other than to try and put regulations in place to keep this from happening again.



Bart Terrell
November 15, 1928 - March 23, 2009

We bid farewell to Bart Terrell, who passed away in Medford, Oregon. Husband of former Oakhurst Democratic Club President and still club member, Ginny Terrell. Loving father and dedicated Democrat. Author of numerous humorous and insightful letters to the Sierra Star and verbal fencer with J.R. Froelich. We send our condolences and comfort to Ginny and her family. He will be missed.

No News Isn't Even Good News Anymore

By Kathryn Heth

Being a news junkie used to be fun; somewhat of a status symbol actually. You knew what was going on. You were hip, with it, in the know. You could hold your own during timely discussions. You were respected for your knowledge.

Well, the fun is over. Like fatal gunshots, words like stimulus, Madoff, recession, depression, Limbaugh, bailout, fallout, foreclosure, Wall Street, Palin, Baghdad, are killing us. Keeping up with the news can render you depressed as hell.

Roosevelt's statement, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself", never made any sense to me. Of course we fear fear. Most people, in my circle at least, are scared to death. Fearful that we are in such a quagmire on all fronts that hope isn't springing eternal anymore. It's not even lying in wait. It's gone.

For those of us in the autumn of our lives, we hopefully won't be around too much longer. I for one don't even want to think about what life as we know it now will be like in, say, 20 years. Uh oh, here's a sobering thought. I'll only be 98 in 20 years. Now I'm really depressed!



Rosie Friedrich (Daughter of John Friedrich) with Obama



Patsy Montgomery and Susan Rowe at Inaugural Celebration in Fresno

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Today's Date: _____

___ Mariposa: Annual Dues are \$10.00 per person
\$15.00 family
Lifetime membership \$150.00

or

___ Oakhurst: Annual Dues are \$5.00 per person

___ New Member or ___ Renewal:

How did you find out about us? _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: ___ ZIP: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____


E-Mail: _____ Fax: _____

Supervisorial District (if known): _____

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Please mail form and check payable to:

Mariposa Democratic Club -or- Oakhurst Democratic Club
PO Box 5008-268 PO Box 760
Mariposa, CA 95338 Oakhurst, CA 93644
(209) 742-1010 (559) 658-2342



FLOAT FOR RENT
Our giant, splashy and wonderful float is for rent!
Tell your friends and relations.
 For information call Jery Lacayo

Mortimer Mouse Sez...

HooooooBoy-----!
Did you see Les Marsden's
new haircut????

